

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: May I know, Sir, whether, in view of the fact that the Agreement was signed eight years ago, in 1952, the Government have considered the advisability of going into this matter again, especially because many new rules and bylaws have been introduced in Pakistan, in East Pakistan especially, to restrict the issuance of passports to the minorities when they want to come to India? Some restrictions have also been imposed on the Indian nationals desiring to go to East Pakistan.

SHRIMATI LAKSHMI MENON: Sir, the whole question of liberalisation of Indo-Pakistan visas had been discussed by our High Commissioner in October 1959.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: The hon. Prime Minister, the other day, said that it had been generally discussed, not specifically. May I know, Sir, why the Government, especially having regard to the situation that has now arisen in East Pakistan with regard to this matter, are not going into the actual problems that have cropped up and are not taking them up with the Pakistan authorities, and why are they not liberalising passports to improve matters?

SHRIMATI LAKSHMI MENON: Sir, this was specifically discussed by our High Commissioner, and we were told that the Pakistan authorities were reluctant to liberalise the visa rules.

SHRI FARIDUL HAQ AN SARI: May I know whether the news item which appeared only last week came to the notice of the hon. Minister, to the effect that people come to India on the visas which permit them to visit as many times in the year as they like and when they go back from India, they take along with them jewellery and other valuable things?

SHRIMATI LAKSHMI MENON I do not know it, Sir.

DIFFICULTIES OF LAC MANUFACTURERS IN PURULIA DISTRICT

•444. SHRI SUDHIR GHOSH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have received a representation from the small manufacturers of lac in the District of Purulia, West Bengal, about serious difficulties, experienced by the small scale producers;

(b) if so, what steps have been taken or are proposed to be taken by Government in the matter; and

(c) what was the foreign exchange earned by the lac industry in the last financial year?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI SATISH CHANDRA) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The points raised in the representation are being examined in consultation with appropriate authorities. The Buffer Stock Scheme has already taken shape.

(c) Exports of lac during 1959-60 is Rs. 6'34 crores.

SHRI SUDHIR GHOSH: May I know whether the Government is considering the possibility of helping these small producers by asking the State Trading Corporation to look into the question of taking over the entire output of this small industry and arranging for its export, in view of the special interest that the Government is taking in small industries and, as the Minister is probably aware, the Committee that recommended the formation of the State Trading Corporation made this recommendation, that particularly this lac industry was suitable for such action?

SHRI SATISH CHANDRA: Sir, the State Trading Corporation does not propose to take over this but an exporters' association has been formed which regulates all exports. This is a very dispersed industry, and there are thousands of growers from whom lac has got to be collected in small lots and then processed. An exporters' association has been formed to deal with the question of prices.

SHRI SUDHIR GHOSH: Sir, these small producers are very weak people and if they are left at the mercy of the big exporting firm of Calcutta, they are not likely to survive at all. In view of that position, Sir, will the Government look into the possibility of asking the S.T.C. to help them?

SHRI SATISH CHANDRA: Sir, there are other methods of doing it, and they are being considered. The position has definitely improved now. The prices which had gone down to Rs. 56 have now come to about Rs. 70 per maund, and the situation is improving. Several steps are being taken by the West Bengal Government as well as the Lac Cess Committee.

SHRI K. SANTHANAM: May I know what percentage of lac is converted into shellac before export?

SHRI SATISH CHANDRA: Sir, most of the exports take place in the form of seed lac and shellac which are both processed; very small quantities go out in raw form.

SHRI B. K. P. SINHA: May I know if the schemes or proposals, whatever they are, will be extended to manufacturers in other places also, such as the districts of Bihar, or they will be confined only to the Purulia manufacturers?

SHRI SATISH CHANDRA: Sir, Purulia is the main centre but whenever any scheme is formulated, it applies to other places also.

*445. [The questioner (Shri Bairagi Dwibedy) was absent. For answer, vide col. 2439 infra.]

APPLICATIONS FOR PASSPORT FROM MEMBERS OF LEGISLATURES

*446. SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of passport applications by members of the Legislatures received separately in the years, 1956, 1957, 1958, 1959 and so far in 1960; and

(b) the names of members of the Legislatures whose applications were rejected during each of the above years?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI LAKSHMI MENON): (a) and (b) A statement is placed on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

Part I.—Figures of applications received from Members of Legislatures as collected by the Regional Passport Office on random check of their records are given below. It has not been possible to collect full statistics because no separate record of applications from Members of Legislative Assemblies/Members of Legislative Councils and other categories of persons is maintained. Applications from Members of Legislatures are recorded in the same manner as they are received from the general public.

1956	..	17 applications.
1957	..	6 applications.
1958		14 applications.
1959		25 applications.
1960	..	35 applications.